



## Weekly Message from the Tribal Chairman

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**March 30, 2005**

### **Dear Tribal Employees:**

This is the first of what will be weekly updates from the Chairman's Office. I will share with you some of the accomplishments from the prior week, address pending concerns and also recognize innovation and creativity in our workforce when appropriate.

This first update will cover the past few weeks, which have been very busy, though fruitful.

### **Kenosha County Supervisors Approve Intergovernmental Agreement:**

On Tuesday, March 15th, the Kenosha County Supervisors approved the Kenosha Projects' Intergovernmental Agreement, which the City approved the week before. Myself, Vice Chairperson Johnson and Legislator Boivin attended the meeting where the Supervisors took action. The County Board passed the agreement by a vote of 22 to 5, while the City Council passed it by a vote of 13 to 2. The three officers traveled to Kenosha this Monday for a signing ceremony with the City and the County. We had the honor of executing this agreement, but clearly, much of the work was done by the 2004 class of officers.

### **Strategic Planning:**

The Legislature met at the College of the Menominee Nation to revisit our strategic planning document that was primarily developed in 2003 and early 2004. The session was facilitated by Chad Waukechon. We revisited our mission statement and determined that each newly constituted Legislature should reaffirm their commitment to the mission and the nine vision statements should guide our various Standing Committees. In addition, we discussed a proposed community survey and CMN will revisit the intent and scope of the survey and rewrite many of the questions and get back to the Legislature before it is circulated. Brenda Tomow joined our ranks and is the coordinator for the Tribe's strategic planning efforts.

### **Recessed 03/17 MTL Meeting to Address IDC Budget:**

The Tribal Legislature met on 03/21 to review the proposed Indirect Cost proposal. The Budget Committee recommended an IDC rate of 11.98% and the Legislature made some adjustments, including adding computer work stations at each legislator's seat in the board room and we also restored funding for employee recognition, which brought the rate up to 12.27%.

### **Special Meeting with MTE/MTL to discuss General Council Meeting Agenda:**

Again, a week ago Monday the Legislature met with MTE to discuss how we could be best prepared to address the agenda items for the Special General Council on Forestry issues. Essentially, we determined

who among ourselves would take the lead on various items and what supporting documentation/hand-outs would prove to be the most helpful.

### **Eagle Feather Ceremony:**

Myself and the Vice-Chairperson were invited to attend an eagle feather ceremony at the Menominee Indian High School where eagle feathers were bestowed upon the Menominee Eagle's Basketball team and coaching staff on Tuesday, March 22nd. I asked Vice Chairperson Johnson to read the Legislature's proclamation, since she was a proud parent of one of the players and also a former school board member. This ceremony was very poignant, for the loss of the students' fellow classmates wasn't far from anyone's memory and we all just learned of the tragedy at Red Lake, so while we celebrated the team's triumphs, we also prayed for those lost lives.

Last night I attended the Menominee Indian High School's Winter Athletic Banquet at the High School – the Boys Wrestling team and the Boys and Girls Basketball teams were honored. Gina Washinawatok spoke about the impact the Boys' successful season had upon us and concluded by saying “they put the unity back in community” – which summed up beautifully the impact this winning team had upon the reservation!

### **Off-Reservation Gaming Round Table:**

I attended a round table discussion on Off-Reservation Gaming put on jointly by the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Gaming Association in Washington, DC last week. There seems to be discernable movement both in the House and the Senate in trying to draft legislation around the expansion of off-reservation gaming. Representative Pombo's staff discussed his proposed legislation and laid out a series of concerns that prompted the Congressman to try and address this complex issue.

Tribes generally had concern about opening up the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act to possible amendments, but there was some clear support among some of the eastern tribes to try and limit any out-of-state casino expansion, which seemed like a direct response to some potential treaty based settlement proposals by Governor Pataki around the Wisconsin Oneida and Stockbridge-Munsee proposed New York based casinos. United Southeastern Tribes, a consortia of 24 eastern seaboard tribes passed a resolution that stated they would “oppose any legislation that would allow, individual Indian Nations or Tribes from establishing a reservation acquiring trust land or exercising governmental jurisdiction in a state other than the state where they are currently located...”

Obviously, the Menominee Tribe has a vested interest in this debate, since proposed off reservation legislation impacts Kenosha, so we will continue to monitor this debate as legislation is proposed or drafted, so that our interests are represented in these deliberations.

### **Stockbridge-Munsee Collaboration:**

The Stockbridge-Munsee leadership invited our officers to meet with them to discuss how our two tribes might work more closely on a variety of issues. One of the primary concerns relates to Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) in the upcoming Town of Red Springs election on Tuesday, April 5th. They asked that we try and reach out to our Middle Village residents and ask that they partake in this election, so that we ensure our collective Native voice resonates at the polls. Of the slate of candidates running, Amy Katchenago and Terrance Miller have some ties to the Menominee Tribe, and Pam Huck, is married to the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribal Attorney. Clearly, the Town of Red Springs has an important role in Middle Village's annexation.

We also discussed hosting a vendor appreciation luncheon together, since both tribes probably share a large cross-section of vendors. The luncheon would provide us a forum to demonstrate to local business the economic impact our two tribes have upon the region. Plans will take shape for this luncheon in the coming weeks.

Finally, both tribes discussed how we might maximize upon the 150th anniversary of the 1856 treaty where the Menominee provided the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe their homeland in Wisconsin. We decided to create a task force around this celebration to determine appropriate programming.

#### **Menominee Police Assist Red Lake Indian Community:**

Clearly, our prayers go out to the Red Lake Indian Community and we were heartened to learn that Chief of Police Mark Waukau and Sgts. Jerit O'Kimosh and Richard Nacotee and Officer Richard Irving all traveled to Minnesota to assist the Red Lake Tribe with Police protection as they struggled to maintain order and manage the barrage of press. These four officers spent a week at Red Lake during this crisis. We applaud these officers for stepping forward and offering their assistance, especially, since they sacrificed a holiday weekend with their loved ones.

#### **General Council Meeting on Forestry Issues:**

Over 125 Menominees attended a Special General Council meeting on Saturday to hear and learn more about forestry related issues. This meeting was called for at the Tribe's annual General Council in January and brought together both the Menominee Tribal Legislature and the Menominee Tribal Enterprises Board of Directors. The agenda was aggressive, in that there were nine items on it and time only provided members to address four of the items. The meeting was recessed until Saturday, April 23rd at 9:00 a.m. Several items remain to be addressed on the agenda, including stumpage and excess profit.

It is hoped that some of the issues and concerns raised at this initial meeting will be able to be resolved between the Legislature, MTE and the Bureau of Indian Affairs by the 23rd.

We are looking for a more suitable place to host this recessed meeting, since the Casino's expanded room was at capacity and some members could not be seated. Gene Caldwell was elected Chairman for this Special General Council and is to be commended for his efforts.

#### **Employee Recognition:**

It was brought to my attention that Kathy Kaquatosh celebrated her 30th year with the tribe a few weeks back – she deserves special recognition for her three decades of service. I wanted to use this forum to recognize employees who have given so generously to the tribe and also honor employees who go beyond the call of duty, for we rarely take the time to honor service and achievement.

#### **In Closing:**

Thank you, I hope you find this initial update helpful and that the information shared with you provides you a context for some of our accomplishments and the challenges before us.

Sincerely,

Michael Chapman  
Chairman  
Menominee Tribal Legislature